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December 12, 1999

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in response to your guidelines regarding growing of alfalfa and related sprouts for food consumption. I own and operate a small sprout "farm" in Medford, Oregon. Sunshine Sprouts has been my sole source of income since 1972. I gross about \$150,000 a year, and I work seven days a week, 10 hrs./day, and have one part-time employee who works about 15 hrs./week.

My operation has been licensed and regularly inspected by the Oregon State Dept. of Agriculture since I began twenty-seven years ago. I have been following the problem of contamination of sprouts closely since the first reports surfaced. Oregon Dept. of Ag. has regularly been sampling and testing both my seeds and product for over three years now. I attended the hearings on these problems in Washington D.C. in 1998, and also participated in a full day Sprout Safety Education Course given by the Calif. State Dept. of Agriculture in November 1998. I have been disinfecting my seed with 20,000ppm calcium hypochlorite since taking that course. I also attended a sprout growers meeting hosted by Oregon Dept. Ag., with FDA representative, in Salem, Oregon on December 2 of this year.

The current guidelines on testing of all batches of sprouts are unworkable for two reasons:

- 1.) The cost of testing is more than the profit on the crop. I cannot remain in business if I have to follow these testing guidelines to the letter.
- 2.) Testing has NOT shown to be reliably effective in indicating contamination.

I feel that the disinfection of seeds (i.e. 20,000ppm CaHypo) should be required of all "green" sprout growers, that every lot of seed be tested, and that all sprout growers be closely inspected by their respective Depts. of Agriculture.

I am doing everything in my power to run a sanitary operation and produce a safe product. After all, I'm in the health foods business. I'm hoping you will solve this problem to the benefit of both the consumer and the producer.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Marc Dake

*Marc Dake*

Sunshine Sprouts

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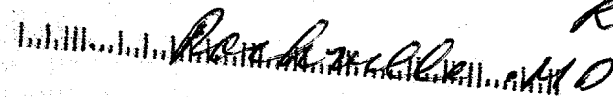


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